



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Memorandum

Date: June 15, 1998

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-60

Subject: Locomotive Emergency MU Fuel Cut-Off Switch

From: Edward R. English
Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance

To: Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators,
Motive Power & Equipment Specialists and Inspectors

As a result of an accident involving a run away Union Pacific (UP) freight train that derailed at Hayden, California, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a Notice of Safety Bulletin in the Federal Register on January 30, 1997. This notice requires all railroads to inspect locomotives to determine if the emergency MU fuel cut-off switch is located in such a position that it can be inadvertently activated by the engineer. Inadvertent actuation of such a switch located at knee level to the engineer is suspected as the cause of this accident.

FRA was initially led to believe that this problem was limited to 365 EMD-SD-60M series locomotives manufactured for the UP. However, information from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) reveals that the problem may involve more than cut-out switches located at knee level. An E-mail message from a BLE member points to the possibility of a problem with switches located near the sun visor. The language in the Notice of Safety Bulletin is broad enough to cover this possibility.

During normal inspections, MP&E and OP inspectors should carefully examine the locomotive fuel cut-off switch for vulnerability to inadvertent actuation. When a locomotive is found to have such vulnerability, the inspector should work with the railroads to comply with the Notice of Safety Bulletin as quickly as possible.

Any disagreements arising over whether a switch is vulnerable or not, that can not be resolved at the regional level, should be referred to the Motive Power and Equipment Staff Director.

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